

AFA UPDATE

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TROY

I've seen Troy since you last heard from me, so now I feel justified in making a few observations on it. Were all the abusive reviews justified? Is this really a stinker of a movie, as so many of the critics claimed?

In a sentence: The columnists who scoffed at Troy...well, they Just Don't Get It.

More than one reviewer slammed the writing and delivery as "cheesy" and "corny." This tells us more about the reviewer than it does about the movie. The Iliad is not some insignificant little twenty-first century tale about dull people; it is a vast story of demigods, heroes, and entire peoples at war. Lines that might sound silly if uttered by the local shoe salesman are entirely appropriate when pronounced by Achilles or Hector. If the sentiments sound out of tune with our present culture, it is only because we are immersed in a degenerate, anti-heroic society. Troy calls us to something higher and more noble.

For Asatruar, Troy is important because of the hard Indo-European ideals expressed by the main characters. Bravery, prowess in combat, sacrifice, and the pursuit of immortal fame are presented as unquestionably splendid things. Thus it was for our ancestors, and thus it should be for us!

BRINGING THE POWER OF THE GODS INTO MIDGARD

It believe we face three great tasks, individually and collectively.

The first task is to bring the power of the Gods into Midgard. The second is to increase the sheer number and the quality of people practicing the Way of the Germanic peoples. The third is to influence our cultural environment. Obviously these three things are connected, and as any one of them rises and falls so will the others; nevertheless, we can

also think of them as distinct foci for our attention and efforts - whether we're talking about you and me in our daily lives, or the grander aims of organized Asatruar.

For the next few paragraphs, I would like to reflect on the first item of this trinity: bringing the power of the Aesir and Vanir into our human realm.

I believe that the Holy Powers are connected to Midgard largely through us. We are the kin, the agents, the co-workers, the representatives of the Gods on this plane of existence. One example is the ancient belief, found throughout Indo-European lore but specifically present among the Germanic peoples, that war "was seen as a struggle between numinous forces in conjunction with physical ones. Both of these are considered to be extensions of the same ultimate force" as Edred Thorsson puts it in Futhark. Professor Jean Haudry writes that war among the Indo-Europeans "was above all a game umpired by the gods." As in war, so in other matters; we have the power to advance or retard the role of the Aesir and Vanir in this world.

How do we increase the might and main of the Holy Powers in Midgard? The main way is through ritual action (Warfare, as mentioned above, was seen as a ritualistic process by the ancients). Our blots - those "honorings" of the Gods that are the main pillar of Asatru religious practice - are the premier example. In blot, energy is exchanged between a deity and humans. The bonds that tie us to the Holy Powers are renewed and strengthened. The lines of divine communication are kept open by our devotion and offerings. Blot empowers us, and increases the manifestation of our holy kin in the world.

Sumbel is our other principal ritual form. In it, we invoke the Gods as we summon power from the metaphysical reservoir we call the Well of Urth. The influence of the Holy Powers is thus renewed among us, radiating from the might of great deeds done in the past, so that we can use that might in the present.

Finally, consider seasonal festivals. By marking the year's tides, we become participants in the cosmic cycles and creators/preservers of the world order along with the Gods themselves -

"Then gathered together the gods for counsel,
the holy hosts, and held converse;
to night and new moon their names they gave,
the morning named, and midday also,
forenoon and evening, to order the year."

(Hollander)

By thus identifying with the Holy Ones, we bring their power into Midgard as though by a sort of induction - as we become more Godlike, the might of the Gods grows in the world through us.

It follows from all this that the better our blots, the more evocative our sumbels, the greater the power of our seasonal festivals the better we shall be as conduits of the divine might and main. For most of us this is rather hit-and-miss, but we can accelerate our growth by making improvement a priority. Practice is important. So is trying to live in accordance with the Nine Virtues, since this helps us accumulate spiritual power. And beyond that, there are any number of exercises and practices that will increase your own ability to make the connection with the Gods. The curriculum given in Thorsson's Nine Doors of Midgard is an excellent one; you can use it "as is" or adapt it to meet your personal needs.

All of us are capable of upping our ritual voltage, so to speak. By doing so we manifest the might of the Gods all the better, and begin to change the world around us.

Next AFA Update...Why we should bring more people to the Way of the Germanic peoples, and how to do so!

"ODIN LIVES!" RADIO

Odin Lives! Radio remains a "must hear" resource for all of us who follow the Germanic folkway. Chris, Dave, and their supporters are doing a great job for us all.

Odin Lives! broadcasts every Thursday night at 8 PM Eastern Time on a frequency of 7.415 MHz. This broadcast is repeated the next Tuesday morning at 12:15 AM on the same frequency.

You can also listen on the Internet. For information on programs, times, and how to tune in, go to <http://www.odinlives.org/index.html>.

IMPORTANT DATES

June 9 - Day of Remembrance for Sigurd the Volsung. No Germanic hero outshines Sigmund's noble son. His courage and nobility won him fame shining through the centuries. Recall his glory by listening to Wagner's Ring operas, or by doing something generous, or by slaying one of your own private dragons.

June 21 - Midsummer. This is the sun's moment of greatest glory, and the time of longest daylight. After today, the sun's decline begins. Decorate your house with sunwheels. Build a bonfire, or if that's not possible, burn a candle in her honor.

Hail the Holy Ones!

Hail the AFA!

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